

CHAPTER VIII: THE PROLONGED BLOCKADE:
REACTION ON TAIWAN AND IN THE FIELD

GRC PRESSURE ON WASHINGTON

In contrast to public pressures to reduce American involvement, which continued to mount during September, the United States was confronted with appeals from the GRC for more American action. During the period of September 7 to October 6, the GRC, with U.S. military assistance and convoy support, gradually improved its capability to land supplies on Quemoy. While expressing gratification for the stepped-up U.S. military support, Chinese Nationalist officials continued to press for greater U.S. involvement and for permission to bomb the mainland under current conditions. The pressure increased as the success of the convoy operations grew. GRC officials were uncertain about the U.S. response to an invasion of Quemoy and sought a firm private assurance and a public statement that the United States would defend the Offshore Islands. They pressed Smoot on the need for him to have the authority to authorize bombing the mainland by GRC or U.S. forces in the event

of an invasion attempt or bombing of Quemoy. They accepted as inevitable the resumption of the Sino-American Ambassadorial talks but put pressure on the United States not to make any agreements at the meetings. In particular they made clear, both publicly and privately, their opposition to a ceasefire arrangement which the United States was to seek to negotiate at Warsaw. GRC officials continued to hope that U.S. military action against Chinese Communist forces would become necessary. They sought to increase the intensity of the crisis by misleading information on the supply situation on Quemoy, by threatening to bomb the mainland, and by provoking air battles.

In public statements GRC officials expressed their impatience and their feeling that the war would have to be carried to the mainland. On September 7 the GRC Chief of Staff, General Wang Shu-ming, in a radio broadcast told the people in Fukien Province on the mainland to evacuate areas near Chinese Communist military bases to escape GRC retaliatory actions should the Chinese Communists try to invade the Offshore Islands. Smoot had told General Wang in a meeting on September 6 that

the basic American position on action against the mainland had been conveyed orally by Ambassador Drumright to Chiang at meetings held on August 24 and 31.* He summarized United States views as being that in the event the Chinese Communists launched air attacks on Quemoy and Matsu and such attacks were met by GRC aircraft, the Government of the United States would consider that the GRC's inherent right of self-defense would include GRC air attacks on aircraft conducting such attacks and the right to pursue the Chinese Communist aircraft to their bases and attack these bases. Smoot, in reporting on this conversation, expressed his view that the GRC had shown admirable restraint under the most dire circumstances.¹

On September 12, with only 441.6 tons having been landed, Drumright reported that if the Chinese Communist interdiction continued to be successful, GRC pressure on the United States to supply all the way to the beach and knock out the Chinese artillery would mount rapidly.²

Smoot conferred with GRC Defense Minister Wang and Chiang Kai-shek. It was agreed that because of the Chinese

* See pp. 147-148, and 209-

Communist ability to zero in on all of the beaches, it would be necessary to use mobile landing techniques.

Chiang was reported to have been assured by the new plan, but he told Smoot that if the situation did not improve within a week, "quite drastic steps would have to be taken."³ On the same day, in a statement in Washington,

the new GRC Ambassador to the United States, Dr. George K. C. Yeh, in reaction to what might take place at

Warsaw, said his government would not agree under any circumstances to a ceasefire in the Taiwan Straits. He

said that his government would not agree to a political settlement involving the withdrawal of GRC troops from

Quemoy or Matsu or their neutralization or demilitarization. He criticized as inadequate the Seventh Fleet

convoy system and asserted that Chinese Communist attacks on Quemoy freed the GRC from the need to get United

States consent to take offensive measures against the mainland.⁴ In a conversation with Dulles on September 13,

Ambassador Yeh stated that Chiang Kai-shek was "annoyed" by the United States observance of the three-mile limit. ..

Yeh stated that Quemoy was GRC territory and that the GRC had invited the United States in. He emphasized

that the GRC was embarrassed by public references to an exchange of notes restricting GRC actions. He stated that the GRC was not satisfied with the convoys and wanted 8-inch howitzers included. Dulles, in reply, pointed out that many of America's allies and many neutrals were pressing for "appeasement." He stressed that the United States was isolated in world opinion on this issue and must take this into account. He assured Yeh, however, that there would be no appeasement or surrender.* Dulles asserted that it was foolish to put so many troops on the Offshore Islands and told Yeh that Eisenhower was unhappy about this and felt that it was an extremely foolish and in fact an "utterly mad policy." He noted that Eisenhower was preoccupied by this aspect of the situation. Dulles asserted his personal belief that the GRC was not holding back on attempting to resupply Quemoy and that it was a question of experience. He made this statement in response to an inquiry by Yeh into the charge that the GRC Navy was shirking and Yeh's

*Dulles was asserting his genuine feelings here in saying that allied and neutral opinion had to be taken into account and that his assessment was that it was pressing for appeasement.

comment that the Army Commander on Quemoy had in fact wanted ships to turn back if attacked.

In closing, Yeh noted that Chiang would always consult the United States but preferred not to have this stressed. Chiang had asked Yeh to tell Eisenhower and Dulles that he would do nothing foolish militarily. Dulles concluded by emphasizing that the United States could not act without the support of U.S. public opinion and to some extent, world opinion.⁶

Smoot reported on the 13th that while each convoy showed signs of improvement, the GRC had not yet demonstrated an ability to overcome the blockade. He noted that the current daily requirement estimate of 696 tons could be drastically reduced.⁷ On the 15th, Smoot was able to report that he was optimistic because of the GRC success in landing supplies on the 14th.⁸

On September 14 the GRC Foreign Minister told Drumright on Taiwan that he was not worried about supplying Quemoy, but about the public criticism on Taiwan of continued failure of the convoy operation and GRC inaction in face of Chinese Communist artillery fire. Drumright, in reporting this conversation, noted that he

shared this concern.⁹ Press reports from Taipei on September 14 indicated that pressure was being applied against the United States to escort all the way to Quemoy, but a U.S. spokesman on Taipei said that the shoal water around Quemoy would keep escorting destroyers three miles off shore even if the limit were removed.¹⁰ The same press report quoted the GRC Defense Minister as stating that 900-ton gunboats resembling the Soviet RIGA type might have reached the Matsu area,¹¹ this move apparently being part of the campaign of the GRC to create the impression that a new crisis might be brewing in the Matsu area.

On September 15, Chiang, in an interview with Stewart Alsop, stated that the convoy system was no solution. He declared that if the blockade continued, the GRC would be forced to order its Air Force to attack Chinese Communist artillery. He reported that the United States had begged Chiang to wait and see and that Chiang had agreed, but that he might lose patience. Chiang was reported by Alsop to be disturbed by the slight hint in the Eisenhower statement of September 6 that some sort of deal with the Chinese Communists concerning the Offshore Islands might be made and in

particular by press interpretations of the Eisenhower comment. Chiang said that anyone who thought that Eisenhower wanted neutralization or demilitarization of Quemoy and Matsu was guilty of a misinterpretation, and he implied that he would oppose any such arrangement.¹²

On the next day, Premier Chen Cheng declared that if the Chinese Communists kept up the blockade, this would "mean extending the war" to the mainland.¹³ Cheng was addressing the GRC National Assembly, which, in a resolution, called for "immediate and effective" air attack by the United States and the GRC to stop the Chinese Communist gun bombardment of Quemoy.¹⁴

On the 16th, a CIA telegram from Taipei warned that the GRC was threatening to bomb the mainland if the United States did not take over resupply operations. From the Chinese Nationalist point of view, the telegram indicated, U.S. resupply would at worst save the Islands and at best bring on a U.S.-Chinese Communist war, which the GRC wanted. The estimate of this report was that Chiang would not carry out his bluff to bomb the mainland, but that relations with the United States would be badly strained if the blockade continued.¹⁵

see
Cuba/50.
- Cuba II

On September 17 the GRC press was reported by an American correspondent to be reflecting anti-American themes clearly with official government sanction. These themes were:

1. U. S. willingness to discuss the Taiwan situation at Warsaw.
2. U. S. refusal to send escort destroyers within range of Chinese Communist artillery.
3. U. S. refusal to let GRC warplanes take out Chinese Communist artillery positions.¹⁶

On the same day, however, at Smoot's urging, the GRC appointed a single commander for all aspects of the re-supply operations. Smoot, who had been experiencing great difficulties because of the diffuse GRC chain of command, reported that the effectiveness of the convoy operations should improve in the near future.¹⁷

Also on the 17th in Washington, GRC Ambassador Yeh, in another public statement, said that the GRC was opposed to the U. S. effort to secure the "neutralization" of Quemoy and Matsu by getting the Chinese Communists and the GRC to renounce the use of force.¹⁸ On September 19 in yet another public statement, Ambassador Yeh said that the GRC should order air strikes against the Chinese

Communist guns opposite Quemoy as soon as it had enough planes for effective operations. For the first time he brought out in the open what was beginning to be discussed privately among U.S. officials, i.e., the possibility that GRC troops on Quemoy and Matsu should be thinned out if the crisis came to a halt and Yeh declared that the GRC would not think of thinning out its troops whatever the U.S. pressure.* Yeh also declared that the United States was not telling the GRC about the Warsaw talks.**19

On September 19 a GRC spokesman in Taipei announced that the GRC would support discussion of the Taiwan Straits crisis in the UN only in connection with the charge versus the Soviet Union of aggression through aid to the Chinese Communists. A foreign ministry spokesman declared that the GRC was not prepared to make any concessions to the Chinese Communists to get a ceasefire. He declared that the GRC was opposed to demilitarization or trusteeship for Taiwan.²⁰

* As will be seen, the GRC later agreed to reduce its garrison on Quemoy. See pp. 539-543.

** As will be indicated below, in fact the GRC was fully informed both about the U.S. and the Chinese Communist positions at the Warsaw talks. What Yeh must have meant was simply that the GRC was not given a veto over U.S. actions at the Warsaw talks. See p. 444.

At the same time Premier Chen Cheng in a conversation with Admiral Smoot reported that the GRC could not exercise restraint in the face of an indefinite bombardment because of the morale problem. Drumright, in reporting the conversation, noted that Chen is a strong advocate of restraint and therefore that his statement should be taken very seriously.²¹

At the same time in Washington, Yeh was conferring with Deputy Undersecretary of State Murphy. Discussion was described in the State Department memorandum of conversation as being conducted in a "friendly fashion," and Yeh was reported to be quite honest about the situation on Quemoy, including the existence there of good morale and three or four months of supplies. He reported that civilian casualties had been very heavy--300 to date. He stated that while the GRC did not shoot at Amoy except for a few test shots, control of the Islands made possible the blockade of Amoy and had great psychological value. He declared that the crisis had been created by Khrushchev and Mao in order to get Communist China into international meetings.²²

On September 20 Chen Cheng met with Drumright in a conversation similar to the one the previous day with

Admiral Smoot. He reported that the problem of Quemoy was not supplies, which were adequate until the end of October, but the morale of the Quemoy defenders. He declared that the time had come to attack. He noted, however, that attacks on Chinese artillery emplacements were of doubtful value, and that the best tactic was to destroy Chinese communications and airfields. He stated that the GRC wanted full U.S. logistical support for the operation and that the GRC would not withdraw from the Offshore Islands or accept a formal ceasefire or demilitarization. Under Drumright's questioning, Chen Cheng said that he was not then asking for formal U.S. concurrence in an attack on the mainland and stated that the United States had one week to ten days to concur.²³

Drumright on September 19 reported the GRC's fear that the United States would buy peace at their expense. He stated that the GRC would oppose any formal agreements freezing the situation, and that they would not abandon the Offshore Islands. He stated his estimate that the Chinese Nationalist regime would collapse if the United States managed to force a withdrawal.²⁴

Drumright's assessment was that the GRC would take retaliatory action in two or three weeks if the situation

did not change. He expressed a strong belief that the United States should defend its ally and make no deal with the Chinese Communists. Drumright made the following recommendations:

1. Abandon Warsaw talks after feeling out the Chinese Communists.
2. Condemn the Chinese Communists in the UN.
3. Build up U. S. military forces in Taiwan.
4. Release restraints on GRC and provide them with the necessary equipment and let it do the job of attempting to reduce interdiction. The U.S. should stay out if possible.²⁵

On September 22, Washington received mixed reports on the GRC situation. On the one hand, Drumright reported that the GRC was experimenting with mobile landing craft and with new methods for resupplying Quemoy,²⁶ and Admiral Felt, after a meeting with the officials in the GRC Ministry of Defense, was able to report that they seemed calm and reassured.²⁷ However, in an earlier message, he declared that he did not believe that the GRC would tolerate artillery fire much longer. He felt that the tinderbox was public c on Taiwan and that the GRC would attack the mainland by artillery bombardment or

commando raid when the critical point was reached in regard to public attitudes. He urged the United States to escort all the way in, believing that the Chinese Communists would not fire on U.S. ships, and that if they did, they would be branded the aggressor.²⁸

On September 22, Felt and General Kuter held a meeting with Chinese Nationalist Foreign Minister Yu to discuss the crisis. Kuter, in a later report of the conversation, said that for three and one-half years Yu had held the view that Communist action in Quemoy would bring GRC bombing of the mainland followed by a Chinese Communist bombardment of Taiwan and then U.S. involvement. However, on the 22d, Yu argued that the Chinese Communists would not retaliate because of the recent high-kill rate established by the GRC Air Force, and the Chinese Communist anxiety not to involve U.S. forces in open fighting. Yu concluded that the GRC should attack the mainland and that the Chinese Communist response would only be air-to-air combat. The Communists would lose the air war by attrition and give up.[?] However, Kuter expressed his doubts whether a few hundred GRC and U.S. aircraft could defeat 3,000 Chinese aircraft. He later wrote, "I attributed Yu's change of tone as a device toward securing U.S.

endorsement of the offensive employment of the CHINA AIR FORCE and the early involvement of the United States in actual fighting." Kuter reported that this was the first time in three and one-half years he had interpreted Yu's behavior as being devious.²⁹

As the U.S. Government was moving, as we shall see, toward the firm belief in the ability of the combined current operations to break the blockade, the Chinese Nationalists continued to press for stronger action and in particular emphasized the critical situation on the smaller islands.*³⁰ On September 23, Chiang met with Smoot and Drumright and stressed the need to solve the resupply problem within two weeks. He particularly pointed to the difficult situation on Erh-tan and Ta-tan. He stated that he considered these islands part of the Quemoy complex, and that an assault on them would amount to an assault on Quemoy. He said that his interpretation of Eisenhower's speeches was that it would require U.S. defense against assaults against the Tan Islands. He declared that the GRC would defend these satellite islands and requested U.S.

*The critical nature of the situation on the Tans was confirmed by an American officer on Quemoy, who reported that the Tans had been shelled daily since August 23 and had not received any supplies. There was heavy damage to ammunition and weapons by artillery fire.³¹

air drops to supply them. Chiang predicted amphibious attacks on the Tans within two weeks and said they would be resisted, both directly and by retaliatory attacks against the mainland. He tried to discover what the United States would do if the Chinese Communist Air Force attacked Quemoy. He again stressed the morale problem. However, even at this time, reporting on this conversation, Drumright indicated that the situation seemed to be somewhat eased.³²

The Chinese Nationalists, perhaps recognizing that the American Government was coming to the conclusion that the resupply operations were going to be successful, continued to press for increased U.S. participation before this become too obvious. Thus, on September 24, the Foreign Ministry requested that the United States participate further in the airlift to Quemoy by flying transport planes to augment resupply and prove Quemoy morale. Drumright replied on the spot that approval was unlikely.³³

On September 25, [redacted] was able to report definitely that the American position remained that increased U.S. participation in an airlift was not desirable.³⁴

On September 28, the Taiwan Defense Commander reported to the Chinese Nationalist Ministry of National Defense

was determined to get supplies to Ta-tan and Erh-tan, and if this failed, to bomb the mainland. He declared that the satellite islands would not be abandoned voluntarily, though the Minister of National Defense secretly believed that the small islands were indefensible.

Smoot noted that in terms of the resupply of the major islands, a military analysis did not show a serious situation. Quemoy had supplies for at least twenty days, and the Minister of National Defense has assured him that it would not take action against the mainland without consulting the U.S. However, he noted that, if the GRC believed that the United States would enter the fight immediately to combat air reaction, they would assault the mainland at once. They hoped the United States would enter if the Chinese Communists initiated bombing of Quemoy, but they were not sure, and even if they were sure, they were desperately concerned that the need for approval by Eisenhower would pose a fatal delay. Smoot also noted that General Hu Lin, the Quemoy Defense Commander, could take more effective action in defense of Quemoy if he were assured that the United States would oppose assault and hence did not have to husband his supply of ammunition.

However, Smoot concluded that he believed that he could convince the GRC that resupply was the only solution.³⁵

On September 28, at a meeting in Washington between Robertson and GRC Ambassador Yeh, Robertson stated that the United States could not possibly support defense of the Tans. Yeh agreed and said that he would recommend abandoning and blowing up these islands. Robertson's remark was apparently intended to be an off the record one since at the same time American military officials on Taiwan were operating under strict orders not to inform GRC officials that the United States would not defend the Tans.³⁶

On September 29 at his first press conference since 1955, Chiang assailed the misunderstanding of the crisis by the American people. He stated that the GRC was opposed to any negotiations with the Communists and that the GRC would not at this point bomb the mainland artillery positions.³⁷

In a conversation between Ambassador Drumright and GRC Premier Chen Cheng on September 30, Drumright read to the Premier Washington's response to his proposal to bomb the mainland. Drumright stated that the Joint Chiefs believed that the Offshore Islands could be resupplied by current methods and that it was essential to continue to

exercise restraint. Cheng agreed that the resupply situation was improving.³⁸

On October 1 Drumright reported to Dulles that his press conference remarks of September 30 indicating a U.S. desire to negotiate^{*} were causing uncertainty, uneasiness, unsettlement and fear in Taipei. The American Ambassador noted that the press was misinterpreting Dulles' remarks but that the GRC Government recognized that there was no change in U.S. policy. Nonetheless Drumright emphasized that it was unfortunate that Dulles' remarks were misinterpreted.³⁹

On October 2 Drumright was summoned by Chiang Kai-shek, who stated that he "was highly shocked" by press conference statements by Eisenhower and Dulles,^{**} which will be discussed below, and which were widely interpreted both in Washington and Taipei as representing a softening of the U.S. position. Chiang declared that remarks by Dulles had caused bewilderment on Quemoy, particularly those comments suggesting a gradual withdrawal of forces from the Islands.

^{*} See below pp. 360-362.

^{**} See below pp. 360-363.

Chiang pointed out that he had tried to help U.S. opinion in his press conference by declaring that the Offshore Islands would not be used as a springboard and that he would not ask the U.S. forces to defend the Offshore Islands. He declared to Drumright, however, that the ill-fated Marshall mission of 1946-47 was being resurrected in the minds of the Chinese people, and he asserted that the United States must declare a no-compromise principle.

Chiang stated that he could go no further in public support of the U.S. position and declared that a withdrawal of a small number of troops would have the same effect as withdrawing all of them and would be tantamount to giving up Taiwan. He declared that nothing would prevent his troops from remaining on Quemoy and that he expected Matsu soon to come under fire.

Drumright, in his message to Washington, reporting the conversation, urged the avoidance of remarks suggesting the possibility of withdrawal or the infeasibility of defending the islands, as hurting GRC morale.⁴⁰

In the Chinese Nationalist official minutes of the meeting, made available to Drumright and forwarded to Washington, Chiang's unhappiness with Eisenhower's Newport remark about "peaceful means," which he declared suggested

that the Chinese Communists could get Quemoy and Matsu by negotiation, was particularly cited as damaging to GRC morale. It was stated that the Dulles press conference had an even more serious effect on morale. The troops on Quemoy, according to the Nationalist summary, had previously believed that U.S. Army forces would aid them if the Islands were attacked. Now nothing was said about this and the stress was on the reduction of the garrison. The GRC summary noted that Chiang had stated that no external pressure nor any weapons including atomic bombs could ever force the Chinese Government to evacuate a single soldier from the Offshore Islands. The troops there would keep fighting until their last drop of blood was shed. It was reported that Drumright had assured Chiang--as he was instructed to do⁴¹--that there was no change in U. S. policy.^{42*}

* Since the Quemoy Islands were very isolated and it was difficult to get to them with supplies or ammunition, it should have been somewhat surprising to Drumright that the Quemoy garrison was not alerted by Dulles' press conference statement, and perhaps in the U.S. However, according to both his report and the official GRC record, he did not raise the question of how the Quemoy garrison in its isolated position focusing on artillery attacks on the mainland had learned of the Dulles press conference. How this occurred was made clear to American officials in a CIA report which indicated that the Dulles press conference had been re-broadcast by the GRC to the troops on the Quemoy garrison,

On September 23 a Navy memorandum listed the requests of the GRC to the United States, which had not yet been approved and which were to remain unfilled during the crisis:

1. U. S. statement to the effect that the defense of Quemoy and Matsu was inseparable from the defense of Taiwan, and that an attack on these islands would be regarded by the U.S. as a threat to Taiwan.
2. U. S. assurance that the U.S. would insure communications with the Offshore Islands would be kept open and remain open.
3. The treaty area be extended to the Offshore Islands.
4. The U. S. provide the TDC with concrete instructions on military operations and authorize him to make on-the-spot decisions utilizing U.S. forces.⁴⁴

actually having the effect of causing the lowering of morale.⁴³

This incident provides strong indication that the GRC was trying to manipulate morale on Quemoy in order to get the United States to intervene before it was clear that the blockade could not be broken. Even in early October when it was already believed in Washington that the blockade could be broken, the GRC resorted to the rather clumsy device of rebroadcasting this Dulles speech to Quemoy and then claiming that the speech which they understood had been addressed to other audiences, particularly American public opinion, had caused lowering of morale on Quemoy.

A report of the Taiwan Defense Command prepared in December, 1958, evaluated GRC conduct during this period as follows:

It is apparent that during August and much of September, GRC officials were strongly motivated by their desire to involve the United States, and for this reason they uniformly exaggerated the urgency of support of the off-shore island garrisons. During the early part of September the GRC seemed to recognize that they might be going too far, and might even goad the U.S. into a reduction of the support already given. . . .

The GRC proved to be a loyal and steadfast ally. They lived up to every agreement and were careful not to take action that could invalidate the mutual defense treaty.

One possible major criticism concerned actions by the Minister of National Defense during initial stages, when he over-played the seriousness of the situation. He expressed almost irrational panic that the CHICOMs intended to invade Kinmen [Quemoy] and eventually Taiwan and that active U.S. participation was essential or GRC military officers would not be able to contain the CAF from attacking coastal bases or taking other offensive action. He played up the critical situation of supplies on Kinmen [Quemoy], and particularly the desperate plight of little Kinmen [Quemoy], Erh-tan and Ta-tan, out of all proportion. The Minister realized that the important issues were not military, and made constant requests on the U.S. military to intervene in an effort to bring about favorable political decisions.⁴⁵

American officials on Taiwan, however, did not at any time during September or early October indicate to officials in Washington their firm conviction that the GRC was not providing accurate reports on the recent supply situation. Thus the GRC evaluations and their threat to extend the

If nothing further was done to end blockade

continued to be taken very seriously throughout the period of the artillery fire. By late September or very early October, officials in Washington were to become convinced that the blockade could be broken but they were still to fear a GRC attack against the mainland before the crisis could be brought to a halt.

AMERICAN OPERATIONS IN THE FIELD

American officials in the Pacific directed their attention during September and early October along three lines. They tried to develop an accurate picture of the resupply situation on Quemoy, which could be sent on to Washington. At the same time within the limits authorized by civilian officials, they sought to aid the GRC resupply efforts and to demonstrate to the Chinese Communists American involvement in the defense of the Offshore Islands. They tried in this connection to present a picture of restraint mixed with determination. Finally military officers were engaged in crash planning for the contingency of large-scale conventional operations in the Taiwan Straits.

In seeking to develop an accurate picture of the resupply situation on Quemoy, U.S. officials were up only the general problems the necessary time

lag between the landing of supplies on Quemoy and the processing, collecting, sorting, and evaluating data on supplies landed and the general problem of assessing what the supply routes requirements on Quemoy were. Also, as indicated in the Taiwan Defense Command report quoted above, "the biggest problem was the GRC, who found it in their interest to confuse the resupply status."⁴⁶

Recognizing some but not all of the uncertainties involved in their calculations and under intense prodding from Washington for additional information, officials on Taiwan continued to send the supply reports back to Washington. As will be seen, these reports plus independent evaluations of the situation performed by the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations were to play a critical role in U.S. policy during September.

In addition to supplying the details of convoys sailed and supplies landed, which were roughly correct and are summarized in Table 17 on page 298, officials on Taiwan attempted to provide a running evaluation of their estimate of whether or not the resupply operation could ultimately be successful.

On September 9 Drumright indicated his belief that American actions had succeeded in deterring a Chinese

Communist attack against the Offshore Islands. He indicated that while the Chinese Communists would probably continue their artillery fire, this could be overcome by current actions.⁴⁷ However, after the failure of the convoy on September 11 and the combination of rough seas and inefficient technique which prevented any convoys from sailing on the 9th, 10th, or 12th, Drumright more pessimistically indicated to Washington on the 13th that "I am gradually coming to the view that we will have to seek another solution if the Communists persist in intensive shelling of GRC convoys."⁴⁸ Drumright's solution was for the United States to take over the responsibility for landing supplies and send U.S. manned ships all the way in to Quemoy. He indicated his belief that the Chinese Communists would not attack these convoys and felt that this was safer than concurring in GRC air attacks against the mainland.⁴⁹ Smoot concurred in this pessimistic judgment, indicating that the United States had gone as far as it could without actually taking over the convoy operations and that it was not yet clear that the GRC could overcome the Chinese Communist interdiction.⁵⁰ Following the relatively successful convoy operation on the 14th, Smoot indicated that he was now optimistic that the GRC could

carry through an effective resupply operation, but Drumright continued to be somewhat pessimistic.⁵¹

On the 16th, a CIA evaluation reached Washington which indicated that there was now at least a month's supplies at current rates of consumption on Quemoy. Smoot continued to indicate that there was a high danger of the success of the interdiction campaign.⁵² By the 19th Smoot was able to report that the minimum daily requirement for Quemoy had been substantially reduced to 234 tons and that there was now a fifty day supply on Quemoy.⁵³ Using reports from American officials who had returned from Quemoy and the capacity of junks to augment the regular convoy operations, Smoot was able to report more optimistically on the 21st that the Islands could certainly hold out at least until November 15.⁵⁴

To the end of September there continued to be disagreement among officials in the field as to whether or not the resupply problem had been licked.

On September 24, Kuter sent a personal assessment of the situation to Air Force Generals White, LeMay and Gerhardts following a tour of Taiwan which reflected his belief that the United States had whipped the resupply problem and that the crisis was over. Kuter noted that the

military pressure had eased off a little, thanks chiefly to the quick U.S. response. He reported that though the shelling continued, it was at a reduced rate, and that this coupled with improved landing techniques had increased resupply greatly. He declared that the Chinese Nationalist Air Force was doing very well. He noted that, with increased resupply, the Chinese Communists might resort to the air, but declared that chances of the Chinese Communists achieving air superiority then looked very slim. If the Chinese Communist Air Force bombed Quemoy, they must expect a U.S.-GRC Air Force response and they were not likely to be ready for this. The only alternative to easing off would be an assault, and the Chinese Communists "ruled this out early in the game as too expensive."

Therefore, he concluded that the Chinese Communists would take no steps to expand the conflict. The crucial move, then, in solving the crisis in Kuter's view had been the U.S. air build-up.⁵⁵

On September 25 Felt indicated in a personal message to Burke that the situation was still critical and would require a decision on a new American policy within thirty days.⁵⁶ On September 30 Felt reported that the procedures for transmitting resupply information to JCRAC and Washington

were still not satisfactory. He indicated that he was eliminating flash reports, which tended to be inaccurate and to underrate the amount of supplies delivered, and was substituting delayed reports, which would more accurately reflect what had taken place.⁵⁷

Following several successful landings in the latter part of September, estimates in the field changed radically by early October. On October 1 the CIA representative on Taiwan advised Washington that the conflict had passed the turning point. The supply situation was clearly now not critical, he reported, and the convoys were succeeding in moving supplies to Quemoy. Even GRC officials were now proclaiming that the blockade was broken. The crisis was therefore over unless the Chinese Communists resorted to new methods of weapons or tactics, which was, of course, distinctly within their capability, the report noted. The military phase had been stabilized and the GRC could live with the situation indefinitely. The CIA message concluded by warning that withdrawal from the Islands might still prove the downfall of the regime.⁵⁸

*into?
(China?)*

On the same day a message in a similar vein was sent personally from Smoot to Admiral Burke. Which Smoot stated that there were no recent changes in the political

atmosphere on Taiwan: first, the continued use of restraint and, second, the obvious understanding of the U.S. position. He declared that daily requirements for Quemoy were now admittedly much lower than previously stated and that the Offshore Islands could now hold out with present supplies for six months. He concluded that resupply on a continuing basis could be expected.^{59*}

Efforts to improve the effectiveness of authorized American military operations continued throughout September. On the 9th, the Commander of the Seventh Fleet noted that he considered it essential to deliver 8-inch howitzers to Quemoy at the earliest possible moment. He felt that the best plan was to have the Chinese Nationalists load the guns into GRC-manned LSM-8's and employ U.S. LSDs to debark six miles off the beach. He requested the use of U.S. LSDs for this purpose.⁶⁰

CINCPAC interpreted the existing JCS telegram (947414) as not authorizing the use of U.S. LSDs in this kind of resupply operation.⁶¹ However, on September 27 the Chief

* Although this in fact represented Smoot's real belief, it was clearly also in response to Smoot's request for a telegram of this kind if Smoot could find one in order to swing the political balance in Washington. Actually by the time it was sent there had been general agreement on the possibility of a successful intervention at the present Chinese Communist military activity.

of Naval Operations authorized the use of LSDs with American crews as necessary with the understanding that the LSDs would remain at least three miles from Quemoy.⁶²

On September 10 the Commander of the Seventh Fleet reported to the CNO that he considered the restriction of escort to one destroyer, which had been ordered by Washington because of the lack of fire against the first convoy, had been lifted as a result of the Chinese Communist action against the second convoy. He reported that U.S. surface vessels over the horizon would be of no use against the threat of multiple torpedo boat attack.⁶³

On the same day CINCPAC concurred in this judgment, expressing his belief that the CNO message was general and not specific guidance on future escort and that the principal thing that it stressed was to avoid too great a show of force, which might be construed as provocative.* CINCPAC authorized the Seventh Fleet to have more than one destroyer in sight in convoy operations.⁶⁴

On September 11 CINCPAC published an order creating a unified Taiwan Defense Command directly under CINCPAC.⁶⁵

A TDC telegram on September 16 reported on planning to improve resupply and noted that emphasis was being placed

* The CNO message restricting escort is discussed below.
See pp.

on the part which the Chinese Air Force could play in air attack which might neutralize the gun positions preventing convoy activities. The Chinese Communist gun positions were deeply embedded in several spots, all of which could fire on the beaches. Any attempt to solve the problem by air attack, the telegram stated, would be hampered by the fact that the Chinese Communists would move in superior air support easily at any time on short notice.

The Telegram went on to say that on the initial day, by using Chinese Air Force F-84s with napalm against the gun positions and using screening smokes and Chinese Nationalist F-86s for medium and high cover, successful offloading could be accomplished despite Chinese Communist resistance. However, for the second effort, 24 to 48 hours later, Chinese Communist air capability of sufficient quantity could be moved in to make the operation extremely costly and ineffective unless staging airfields had first been destroyed. Also, in this case, Chinese Communist air action against Quemoy should, Smoot warned, be expected. It was therefore concluded that air attacks on Chinese bases within supporting range would be essential for this kind of operation, that otherwise this operation would be uneconomical and impractical. The telegram noted also that

there was no possibility of effective silencing of the Chinese Communist guns by conventional air attack and that the heavy use of air fire would make sense only as a short-time operation designed to demonstrate an intent to defend Quemoy.⁶⁶ Smoot made clear that non-atomic efforts by the U.S. Air Force and the Seventh Fleet Air Force could not materially assist in destroying the artillery positions because of their small numbers and their other responsibilities (i.e., their general war target assignments).

U.S. military officials on Taiwan had been authorized in early September to take over the air defense of Taiwan as soon as they considered it feasible. On September 18, Admiral Smoot in a letter to the Chief of Staff of the GRC Air Force formally offered to assume responsibility for the air defense of Taiwan.⁶⁷ On September 24 the GRC without a public announcement formally released responsibility for air defense to the United States in a letter from the Chief of Staff of the GRC Air Force to Admiral Smoot. However, it was clear that GRC planes were to continue to participate in the air defense operations that this was to be a combined U.S.-GRC effort with the United States supplying as much of the force as it could in order to relieve the GRC planes for operations over Quemoy and over the mainland.⁶⁸

Air operations by U.S. aircraft in the Taiwan Straits continued to pose difficult problems. On the one hand, air drops by the Chinese Nationalist Air Force escorted by U.S. planes were becoming increasingly effective; in fact, they were eventually to reach the point where Quemoy could have been indefinitely supplied simply by air. However, as the Taiwan Defense Commander noted on September 25, as a result of JCS No. 231915Z, U.S. planes flying beyond international waters into the air space above the three-mile limit surrounding Quemoy were not authorized to defend themselves. The Navy message noted that the Chinese Communists did not know about this U.S. restriction and so far had not attacked the U.S. escorted air drops by air. It declared that as soon as they did so they would discover that there was no U.S. opposition.⁶⁹ This procedure was vigorously objected to by the Commander of the Fifth Air Force, whose units were flying these missions. He declared that, if U.S. aircraft were to be exposed to Chinese Communist attack, they should be fighting aircraft and not transports. He declared that the United States could do the job of resupplying Quemoy by air but only with a substantial cost in life and resources. "If we are going to political pressures to expose U.S. Air Force

personnel to CHICOM flak and fighters over Quemoy, I wish to do it in fighting aircraft so that our crews would have some chance of fighting back."⁷⁰

On September 30, the Taiwan Defense Commander laid down a formal order summarizing the rules of engagement for U.S. forces for air and sea operations as they existed at this time. The order, summarized in Table 21, included reference to the inherent right of self defense, but this apparently was not meant to give U.S. planes the right to fire while over Quemoy. U.S. planes involved in the defense of Taiwan were authorized to attack any enemy aircraft penetrating close to Taiwan and were permitted to pursue the planes but not to attack bases on the mainland. Planes engaged in escorting resupply were authorized to engage planes threatening GRC planes or ships but only in international waters (i.e., not over Quemoy). U.S. ships were authorized to engage Chinese Communist vessels attacking U.S. or GRC ships in international waters and were ordered to prepare to aid in the defense of Quemoy against invasion when ordered to do so.

Planning for Conventional Operations

While officials in Washington were becoming increasingly convinced that the United States would have to use

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atomic weapons in the event that it was necessary to defend Quemoy against a major invasion, forces in the field continued to operate under the directive of August 29 from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which directed them to prepare for initial operations with conventional weapons.*

Washington officials apparently saw no reason to change this directive since it simply said that initial operations might have to be conventional. Washington planning still envisioned that the initial response to an invasion would be restricted to conventional forces, not in an effort to stop the Chinese Communist attack militarily, but rather in the hope of deterring them by making it clear that the United States would intervene. This conventional action was also expected to be sufficient to hold Quemoy until the President could authorize the use of nuclear weapons. What the Joint Chiefs thought of the possibility of major conventional operations was made clear in the rejection of the formulation proposed by the Army for the role of conventional forces.** The Army draft reflected the kind of

* For a discussion of earlier disagreement on how to react to this telegram, see pp. 138-14. For the view on this question in Washington, see pp. 200-293.

... above, pp. 279-283, and Table

Table 21

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR U.S. FORCES IN THE TAIWAN STRAITS

1. Air engagements:

- (1) Inherent right of self defense.
- (2) U.S. aircraft may scramble and intercept against all unidentified aircraft appearing in air defense system above Taiwan or in international waters.
- (3) Hostile aircraft may be considered to be committing hostile acts if flying east of "Davis Line" (an imaginary line running down the Taiwan Straits).
- (4) Unknown aircraft west of Davis Line will be intercepted, identified and kept under surveillance if hostile intent is suspected and may be engaged when declared by the Commander of ATF 13 (P) or any of his three designated subordinates as being hostile.
- (5) Defensive pursuit is authorized if there is an attack. This includes pursuit into enemy territory but not retaliatory attacks on enemy targets.
- (6) U.S. aircraft may be employed over international waters to the extent that the Chinese Air Force cannot fulfill its task.
- (7) U.S. aircraft assigned escort duties are to engage Chinese Communist aircraft which threaten by hostile action U.S. and GRC surface and/or air forces in which U.S. aircraft are assigned air cover while in international waters.
- (8) Unless attacked in vicinity of Taiwan Straits:
 - a. don't fly long direct tracks toward Chinese Communist territory,
 - b. remain twenty miles from Chinese Communist territory,
 - c. fly parallel to Chinese Communist territory,
 - d. make turns away from Chinese Communist territory,
 - e. make no maneuvers which could be considered hostile,

Table 21 -- continued

- f. don't fly within three miles of U.S. ships without first establishing contact, and
 - g. do not fly within three miles of Chinese Communist ships.
- (9) Remain under radar control and "in any case in which the slightest doubt arises in mind of pilot or control as to location of aircraft relative to Chinese Communist territory pilot and/or controller will steer aircraft concerned away from China mainland and mission will be aborted or suspended until position of aircraft is positively identified."

2. Surface engagement procedures:

- (1) Convoy and protect only in international waters. Any U.S. surface or aircraft observing GRC vessels under attack by Chinese Communist surface or air vessels in international waters or Taiwan territorial waters will immediately assist in repelling or destroying.
- (2) U.S. naval forces will stay beyond the three-mile limit of the Offshore Islands. If fired upon, they will fire back while moving out of range.
- (3) If an unprovoked attack occurs on U.S. ships in international waters, take "immediate and aggressive protective measures" including defensive pursuit into enemy territorial waters.
- (4) "If CHICOMS start an assault with evident intent to take one or more of the principal Offshore Islands, U.S. TDC forces [when directed by Taiwan Defense Commander] will directly assist in the defense of the Offshore Islands including attack on CHICOM artillery pieces and airfields in vicinity of Islands being attacked."
- (5) If Chinese Communists invade Taiwan, take immediate action.

planning that was being carried out in the field. No one could be sure that the President would authorize the use of nuclear weapons and thus there was no inclination to stop planning. The view in Washington, however, was not anything like what it was in the field as expressed, for example, in the following statement in a post-crisis analysis prepared by the Taiwan Defense Command:

The most significant change in planning assumptions was that concerning the possible employment of atomic weapons. Although U.S. participation never reached the shooting stage, this changed assumption radically affected the offensive capabilities of U.S. forces available in the area for contingent employment, and required major revision of operational planning and computation of logistic support requirements, ordnance, and other.

It was considered of urgent importance that all U.S. echelons, military and civilian, be fully appraised of the extent to which U.S. forces (and the U.S. contribution to contingent combined operations) have come to rely on the availability of atomic weapons. It is vital that (1) action be initiated to make the use of efficient atomic weapons acceptable to U.S. allies in particular and to the world in general, (2) aggressive and imaginative actions be taken to maximize, tactically and technically, our non-atomic capabilities. 71

Officials at all levels in Washington were in fact well aware of the extent to which U.S. action was contingent on the use of nuclear weapons. However, during the crisis, officials in the field continued to be under the impression that Washington was not aware of what they thought to be

the situation and hence thought they might be able to engage in extensive conventional operations. Thus planning for conventional war contingencies was carried on with some urgency.*

On September 5 CINCPAC advised the CNO that the Taiwan Command arrangements had been predicated on nuclear warfare with the need for highly centralized control at the CINCPAC level. He suggested that there was now need for a single commander directly responsible to CINCPAC and that Annex H of OPS PLAN 25-58 which was being prepared would give the Taiwan Defense Commander this operational control. He noted that Annex H would provide for "countering Chinese Communist interdiction and/or aggression against Quemoy/Matsu/Taiwan/Penghus without the use of nuclear weapons." He requested concurrence in the proposed Annex and the command changes as he outlined it.⁷³ The proposed Annex H was approved, and as part of the consolidation on September 8 the Taiwan patrol forces, as indicated above, became a subordinate command of the Taiwan Defense Command rather than reporting directly to CINCPACFLT.⁷⁴

* Smoot in fact appears to have disagreed with his subordinates and to have come to the conclusion at least after the fact that Quemoy could have been held simply with land forces.

On September 11 CINCPAC was finally able to issue its Annex H of OPS PLAN 25-58 to provide for conventional contingencies for the defense of Taiwan and the Offshore Islands.⁷⁵ It is by no means clear what would have happened had it been necessary to defend the Islands conventionally against a major invasion prior to the issuance of the OPS PLAN.

Annex H of CINCPAC OPS PLAN 25-58 was headed "Countering Chinese Communist Interdiction and/or Aggression Against Chinmen [Quemoy]/Matsu Island Groups, Taiwan and the Penghus. Without Using Nuclear Weapons." It began by noting that the Offshore Islands were of minor importance to the security of Taiwan but of considerable significance to the political prestige of the GRC. The Annex provided for three intermediate phases, designated Phase I-H, II-H and III-H, between Phases I and II of the original CINCPAC OPS PLAN 25-58, and indicated U.S. operations, not including the use of nuclear weapons. When nuclear weapons were to be used, Phase II of OPS PLAN 25- would be implemented with a new atomic strike plan, which was to be issued shortly.

Having provided the background, the Annex went on to describe the situation. It appeared that CINCPAC on September 11. It noted that the Chinese communists had

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increased military operations by intensive artillery fire and support over the Chinese mainland and the Straits and sporadic air attacks on Quemoy accompanied with threats to invade the Offshore Islands. The Annex noted that there was some disagreement as to what their intentions were, but it listed four possibilities:

- a. testing U.S. reaction,
- b. attempting to cause withdrawal by interdiction,
- c. preparing to invade the Offshore Islands, and
- d. preparing to invade Taiwan.

The mission laid out in the Annex was "to negate Chinese Communist action endangering Chinese Nationalist control of Quemoy, Matsu, Taiwan and the Penghus without the use of nuclear weapons." In summary form the Annex indicated three phases:

Phase I-H--absence of evidence of Chinese Communist assault on the principal Offshore Islands with attempt to capture. In this case, the United States should furnish materiel and logistical assistance but no military action.

Phase II-H--CHICOMS start assault with evident attempt to capture one or more of the Offshore Islands. U.S., when directed by higher authority, would assist in the defense of Offshore Islands including attack on enemy artillery positions and local airfields in vicinity of the Offshore.

Phase III-H--when battle extended to Taiwan.

The document continued with a phase table indicating in more detail U.S. and GRC actions in each one of the phases. (See Table 22.) The Annex was issued to subordinate commands and distributed in Washington on September 11, and the subordinate commands immediately set to work to issue their own conventional Annexes in support of Annex H of OPS PLAN 25-58.

On September 12; the day after CINCPAC OPS PLAN for conventional operations was issued, SAC informed the Chief of Staff of the Air Force that it was ready to support CINCPAC with respect to targets he requested but that the choice of units, etc., would have to be SAC's. It reported that five B-47s on Guam were available for CINCPAC operations but that any additional support would have to come from the ZI.⁷⁶ Forces under CINCPAC control available for conventional bombing operations are indicated in Table 23. U.S. efforts to develop a conventional capability in the area continued through this period. On September 18, the Seventh Fleet ordered its subordinate units sacrifice some degree of operational readiness for a nuclear operation by concentrating on preparations for conventional warfare. It authorized additional modifications permitting all

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Table 22

PHASE TABLE OF ANNEX H OF CINCPAC OPS-PLAN 25-58

Phase I-H -- Preparatory

CHICOM Actions

1. Overfly Quemoy/Matsu.
2. Sporadic air attacks Quemoy/Matsu.
3. Increased artillery fire against Quemoy/Matsu.
4. Increase of troops and amphibious activities in Taiwan area.
5. Increase psychological warfare against forces on Quemoy/Matsu.

U.S. Actions

1. Deploy additional air and naval strength.
2. Make air sweeps over international waters of the Taiwan Straits.
3. Expedite modernization of GRC Army.
4. Activate forces in the Philippines and Japan.
5. Prepare to assume air defense of Taiwan.
6. Support GRC air and naval forces which are attacked in international waters or air areas over international waters.
7. Engage CC air units in accordance with rules of engagement.
8. Escort GRC shipping. (This was in fact the description of U.S. operations at that time.)

GRC Actions

1. Attack CC air and naval forces in international waters, or GRC waters or air.
2. In event CC launch air attack on Quemoy and Matsu, engage and follow attacking CC aircraft to China to Chinese air bases and attack them there.
3. Fire against CC batteries and forces or shipping approaching GRC-held areas.

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Table 22 - continued
Phase II-H -- Attack on Offshore Islands

CHICOM Actions

1. Intensified air offensive against GRC air and naval forces in international and GRC water and air (with an attempt to isolate Quemoy/Matsu).
2. Increased air attacks against Quemoy and Matsu.
3. Initiation of an invasion against one or more of the principal islands of the Quemoy/Matsu groups.

U. S. Actions

When directed:

1. Same as above plus
2. Deploy additional air and naval strength to Taiwan as needed and available.
3. Assume air defense of Taiwan if not already in control.
4. Assist in defense of invaded islands including attacks on enemy artillery positions and air fields in vicinity of invaded islands.
5. Engage CC aircraft in accordance rules of engagement.
6. Conduct air and naval attacks against invasion forces and targets of opportunity (first target group).

GRC Actions

1. Same as above plus
2. Air attack of CC gun positions and airfields in the vicinity of the islands as approved by COMUSTDC or higher authority.
3. All-out attack against invading forces and supporting facilities as approved by COMUSTDC or higher authority.

Table 22 -- continued
Phase II-H -- Invasion of Taiwan

CHICOM Actions

extension of battle to international waters in vicinity of Taiwan or the Pescadores or the Penghus or threaten invasion of Taiwan and the Pescadores and the Penghus or air attacks against U.S. air and naval forces in inter-

U.S. Actions

1. Same as above plus
2. Air attack against coastal airfields and coastal centers (second target group).^a
3. When ordered, air attacks against inland fields and target complexes in an 800-mile radius of Taiwan (third target group).

GRC Actions

1. Same as above plus
2. Air attack on coastal airfields and control centers.
3. Air attack on inland airfields and other complexes within an 800-mile radius of Taiwan as necessary.

^a Appendix II to Annex I indicated that the target groups indicated in the Table are as follows: (1) Group I -- targets of opportunity (a) enemy forces intensifying supply of Quemoy and Matsu; (b) invading forces; (c) artillery positions supporting the invasion; (d) staging areas. (2) Group II -- coastal airfields in military control centers (seven). (3) Group III -- inland fields GCI Sites, military control centers and increments. Group I with eighteen targets and following with twenty-two additional targets. The airfields should be attacked on a controlled basis in a gradually expanding arc until destruction complete in an 800-mile radius of Taiwan of fields capable of supporting operations. Operational forces should develop additional targets.

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aircraft to be configured for conventional weapons, but noted that it was necessary to be capable of going either way on short notice. The message indicated that the carrier Midway would be assigned north general war (GEOP) targets and indicated that no further reduction in nuclear capability beyond what was then being authorized was justified.⁷⁷

On September 19 the formation of the Taiwan Defense Command to command all American forces in the area was publicly announced.⁷⁸

On September 26, General Kuter was told by his staff that the situation regarding conventional munitions was serious indeed. It reported that a program of "demilitarization" of conventional weapons had been cancelled but stated that there was still only a limited amount of conventional munitions authorized in support of the EWP (i.e., the general war mission which continued to be the major mission of CINCPACAF). It stated that "if a conventional war is at all likely, the demilitarization program should be canceled and adequate levels established to support operations."⁷⁹

Table 23

PACIFIC NON-NUCLEAR BOMBING CAPABILITY: SEPTEMBER 1958

(1) PACAF

- 1 F-100 squadron at Clark (Philippines)
- 2 F-100 squadrons at Kadena (Philippines)
- 1 F-100 squadron at Chia-ti (Taiwan)
- 1 B-57 squadron at Naha (Taiwan)

Sufficient POL, spare parts and HE munitions for thirty days from Okinawa, Taiwan and the Philippines. There could be a sortie raid of 100 per day delivering 4,000 lbs. of HE while maintaining a substantial portion of their EWP (general war) posture. 2 tons

(2) PACFLT

- 4 CVA with aircraft

Sufficient ammunition for 80,000 lbs. per day for 60 days at 64 missions per day delivering 650,000 lbs. of which 22 missions and 30,500 lbs. would be all weather.

(3) CHINATS

- 650 sorties per day delivering 1,300 bombs for 15 days.

SOURCE: Navy Message CINCPAC to JCS, 052100Z September, 1958, September 15, 1958, No. 0243 (Secret).

REPLY TO THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PUBLIC OPINION AND DECISION MAKING

PUBLIC OPPOSITION

During September public opposition to American involvement in the defense of the Offshore Islands continued to mount in the United States and abroad. American officials were well aware of this opposition and continued to be constrained by it. A sampling of reactions is presented below.

On September 7 Prime Minister Nehru of India said that Quemoy and Matsu must sooner or later be surrendered to the Chinese Communists and declared that he sought a peaceful solution to the problem.¹ On September 3 Philippine Ambassador to the United States General Carlos Romulo stated that the Philippines would welcome a third party move through the UN to seek a solution to the crisis.² While the opposition of the British Government was expressed in private, the Labour Party and the British press expressed disapproval of American actions. British public opinion was opposed to war over Quemoy, and London diplomats feared that U.S. involvement would lead to "a Suez reverse."³

On September 10 Australian Prime Minister Robert Gordon Menzies declared that the Australian Government had

no commitment to help defend Quemoy and Matsu. He did not think that the ANZUS Pact of 1951 covered military operations in the Taiwan region.⁴ On the next day, there was a further indication of lack of support for the U.S.

position even among its allies when Prime Minister Walter Nash of New Zealand suggested that Taiwan be made an independent and neutralized nation.⁵

On September 12 in response to an Eisenhower speech on the Offshore Island situation which will be discussed below,* a number of foreign reactions were reported in The New York Times. Macmillan stated that the United States had neither sought nor received any promise of British military support in the Taiwan Straits. He noted, however, that Britain was obliged to help find a peaceful solution to the Far Eastern crisis by private consultation and public diplomatic action. The French were reported to welcome negotiations but were pessimistic about the possibility of their success. Bonn was silent on the Eisenhower speech, reflecting a deliberate policy of non-involvement.⁶ Japanese Foreign Minister Aichihiro Fujiyama expressed agreement with the U.S. position that the Chinese Communist

use of force caused tensions in the Far East, which should be abated peacefully. A joint U.S.-Japanese statement indicated that no promises or commitments had been made by either country.⁷

On the 17th, resentment of Dulles' policy among West Berliners was reported in the New York Post. According to one of their columnists, Berliners were saying that the U.S. action had strained the Atlantic Alliance and emphasized that they would not support the United States in a conflict with Communist China over Quemoy. West Berliners were also said to have been disturbed by Dulles suggesting an analogy between Quemoy and Berlin. They felt that losing Berlin was of much greater importance and that the West should be prepared to go into World War III to hold Berlin but should not be and would not be to hold Quemoy.⁸

On September 17 the Japanese Government stated that it could not prevent the United States from using its base in Japan to supply troops on Taiwan. It made this statement in commenting on a Soviet note protesting American use of its bases in Japan and indicated that therefore it was helpless to prevent this measure of support to the U.S. military effort.⁹

On September 29 the British Labour Party at its annual conference voted to oppose British support of the United States in the event of a war over Quemoy.¹⁰

One of the few American allies to support vigorously the U.S. action in Taiwan throughout the crisis was the government of Syngman Rhee in South Korea. On September 13 in reaction to Eisenhower's speech, Rhee hailed the talk as a step toward freedom.¹¹ Support for the U.S. position came on September 18 when the military leaders of SEATO were reported to have agreed unanimously to strengthen the defense of the treaty area in light of the Taiwan Straits crisis,¹² and on September 20 when a South Korean envoy to Taiwan vowed complete aid to "Free China."¹³

Public opposition in the United States to the Administration's apparent determination to defend the Offshore Islands was also heavy. On September 18, for example, Walter Lippman argued in a column that the United States should defend Taiwan but not the Offshore Islands.¹⁴ The same view was expressed editorially by The New York Times on the following day.¹⁵

Congressional criticism, particularly from Democratic Senators, increased in volume. It was reported in the press that congressional opposition was heavy and strongly

opposed to Administration policy.¹⁶ Much of the criticism came from members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and from other congressional leaders.*

On September 27 The New York Times reported in a story whose validity was never challenged that eighty percent of the mail to the State Department was critical of the Administration's policy.¹⁹ Vice President Richard Nixon immediately accused an unnamed State Department official of seeking to sabotage American policy by revealing the unfavorable mail response.²⁰ On September 29, Senator John F. Kennedy declared that the United States must find a way to disentangle itself from defense of the Offshore Islands while continuing to defend Taiwan.²¹ The increasing

Democratic attack on Administration policy caused fear that the Communists would interpret the debate as an indication that the United States would not act. Speaking for the

*The Administration nevertheless continued its efforts to secure bipartisan support for its policy. On September 25 the Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations sent a long letter and memorandum to twenty-four congressional leaders attempting to explain the American position.¹⁷

On the 26th, George C. Denny, a staff member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, met with Rear Admiral W. S. Post, Jr., Regional Director of the Far East Division in ISA, to discuss current American policy. While Post sought to justify and defend U.S. policy, Denny informed him that there was only lukewarm support for the policy among Republican members of the Committee. He suggested that the Administration should consider the possibility of withdrawing from the Far East.¹⁸

Democratic Advisory Committee on October 2, Paul Nitze warned that the current debate should not be taken as a sign of disunity or unwillingness on the part of the United States to defend its interests.²²

On September 29, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Senator Theodore Green sent a letter to President Eisenhower expressing his concern about American policy. Though Green did not release the text of his letter until Eisenhower had publicly replied, the press learned immediately of the letter and its general content. Green wrote to express his concern that events "may result in military involvement at the wrong time, in the wrong place, and on issues not of vital concern to our security." The letter continued with Green's assessment that the United States would be fighting without the support of America's allies or of the American people.²³

THE PUBLIC AMERICAN POSITION

Throughout September and early October, Administration officials, basing themselves on the Newport statement, sought in their public statements not only to deter further Chinese Communist military moves but also to answer the criticisms of the policy of the kind discussed above.

On September 7 Eisenhower reaffirmed the U.S. intention to keep Southeast Asia free, and Dulles warned that Communist China had not renounced "the use of force to serve their expansionist aims." He said he did not think that the U.S. vessels sailing inside the twelve mile limit of the China coast would lead to war.²⁴

On September 9 Dulles held a press conference in which he hinted at a fresh approach to negotiations with the Chinese Communists. Dulles stated that the United States might make a new try at Warsaw to obtain from the Chinese Communists an agreement to renounce force in the Taiwan Straits. American efforts, he continued, would be constructive in a situation which might have further consequences and which involved "rights and interests of an ally." He said that the United States could not negotiate the future of the Offshore Islands because they were the property of the Government of the Republic of China. If U.S. ships were hit off Quemoy, the United States would reply in a military way.

During the course of the conference, Dulles acknowledged that he was the "high official" who had been cited as giving the background briefing following the Newport statement.

The Secretary of State indicated that the United States had decided to convoy only to within three miles of Quemoy partly because activities within the three-mile radius might require a decision, or imply that one had been made by the President under the Formosa Resolution to defend Quemoy. He indicated that the decision was also based on the fact that American ships operating beyond the three-mile limit would not risk coming under the fire of the Communist shore batteries. Pressed by reporters to indicate why the American position was remaining ambiguous despite his often stated belief that the most frequent cause of war was miscalculation, Dulles replied that under the terms of the Formosa Resolution and the defense treaty, the President did not have the legal right to assert flatly that the United States would defend Quemoy under all conditions. He concluded by expressing his belief that one could "guess" from the Newport statement whether the United States would defend Quemoy and that he did not want to go beyond that statement.²⁵

Secretary of the Army Brucker on September 10 said that he was convinced the GRC forces were strong enough to withstand a Chinese Communist attack on Quemoy, but, he continued, if the Chinese Communists ignored U.S.

warnings, we were "prepared to show the world what [we] can do."²⁶

On September 11 Eisenhower returned from his vacation at Newport and consulted with Dulles, Haggerty, Goodpaster and Robert Montgomery on a major address on U.S. policy which had been drafted by Dulles.²⁷ In this speech Eisenhower declared that the United States would welcome negotiations which would lead to a settlement acceptable to all parties including the GRC. He noted that the Chinese Communists had said that they were planning to capture Quemoy and had subjected it to a heavy bombardment. He went on to explain why Quemoy could not be allowed to fall:

Let us suppose that the Chinese Communists conquer Quemoy. Would that be the end of the story? We know that it would not be the end of the story. History teaches that, when powerful despots can gain something through aggression, they try, by the same methods, to gain more and more and more.

Also we have more to guide us than the teachings of history. We have the statements, the boastings, of the Chinese Communists themselves. They frankly say that their present military effort is part of a program to conquer Formosa.

It is as certain as can be that the shooting which the Chinese Communists started on August 23d had as its purpose not just the taking of the island of Quemoy. It is part of what is indeed an ambitious plan of armed conquest.

This plan would liquidate all the free-world positions in the Western Pacific area and

bring them under captive governments which would be hostile to the United States and the free world. Thus the Chinese and Russian Communists would come to dominate at least the western half of the now friendly Pacific Ocean.

So aggression by ruthless despots again imposes a clear danger to the United States and to the free world.

.....
I must say to you very frankly and soberly, my friends, the United States cannot accept the result that the Communists seek. Neither can we show, now, a weakness of purpose--a timidity--which would surely lead them to move more aggressively against us and our friends in the Western Pacific area.

.....
Today, the Chinese Communists announce, repeatedly and officially, that their military operations against Quemoy are preliminary to attack on Formosa. So it is clear that the Formosa Straits resolution of 1955 applies to the present situation.

If the present bombardment and harassment of Quemoy should be converted into a major assault, with which the local defenders could not cope, then we would be compelled to face precisely the situation that Congress visualized in 1955.

Thus Eisenhower made it clear that the United States would defend Quemoy. He went on to explain why an explicit commitment had not been made:

I have repeatedly sought to make clear our position in this matter so that there would not be danger of Communist miscalculation. The Secretary of State on September 4th made a statement to the same end. This statement would not, of course, cover every contingency. Indeed, I interpret the joint resolution as requiring me not to make absolute advance commitment. It is to use my judgment according to the circumstances of the time.

But the statement did carry a clear meaning to the Chinese Communists and to the Soviet Union. There will be no retreat in the face of armed aggression, which is part and parcel of a continuing program of using armed force to conquer new regions.²⁸

The President's speech concluded with the hope that negotiations would bring the crisis to an end.*

On September 12, Secretary of Defense McElroy at a press conference further amplified U.S. policy. McElroy declared that the Chinese Communist blockade of Quemoy would be broken but did not state how. He stated that the United States had considered bombing the mainland to knock out shore batteries which were harassing Quemoy but had come to the belief that it could supply Quemoy without this. The United States would resist a Chinese Communist assault

* James Reston in an article in the New York Times in commenting on the Eisenhower speech interpreted it as saying that the U.S. would fight if it was necessary to prevent the conquest of Quemoy and Matsu by the Chinese Communists. He noted that the speech had made no reference to the latest reports that the United States would suggest to the Chinese Communists that if they renounced the use of force, we would tell the GRC to leave Quemoy and Matsu and end its operations on ships and planes in the Chinese Communist ports of Amoy and Hainan. Neither did he make any mention of U.S. convoying ships or planes flying over Chinese Communist territory. In addition, Eisenhower, according to Reston, had ignored the protests of U.S. allies and Democrats. He interpreted Eisenhower's sticking to the original American position to mean that the U.S. would not fight for Quemoy and Matsu in the first stages, but would if it were necessary--if the GRC were losing.²⁹

on Quemoy without waiting for the GRC first to try to defend it alone. Quemoy, he said, was regarded as a major part of the Taiwan defense system and that since the Chinese Communists had said that taking Quemoy and Matsu was part of an attack on Taiwan, an attack on Quemoy and Matsu would be regarded as giving the President authority, under Congressional Resolutions, to take whatever steps he considered advisable.³⁰

On September 12 Eisenhower replied publicly to Khrushchev's letter of September 8.* He declared that the Chinese Communists were seeking to capture Taiwan and the Offshore Islands and suggested that the Soviet Union urge the Chinese Communists to seek a peaceful solution. Eisenhower again expressed the willingness of the United States to negotiate.³¹

As another part of the effort to impress upon the Chinese Communists U.S. military strength and determination, Admiral Felt arrived on Taiwan to confer with Chiang Kai-shek and his own subordinates in the newly established Taiwan Defense Command. He expressed confidence in U.S. destructive capability.³² On the 15th, the Department of Defense announced in Washington that it had assigned an anti-aircraft

*See pp. 311-316.

battalion equipped with Nike Hercules missiles, using both conventional and atomic warheads, to the "Pacific area."³³

On September 18, Dulles made a speech at the UN in which he expressed the hope that negotiations would lead to a cease-fire. The prominence given to the Taiwan situation had grown in importance as the speech, originally drafted in the International Organization section in State on September 10, was circulated within the Department and worked over by Dulles.³⁴ In his speech Dulles declared that while the situation was complicated, there were two "undisputed and decisive" facts:

1. The Chinese Communist regime has never during its 9 years of existence exercised any authority over Taiwan, the Penghus, or the Quemoy or Matsu Islands.

2. The Chinese Communist regime is now attempting to extend its authority to these areas by the use of naked force.³⁵

The Secretary of State told the General Assembly that force should not be used to settle disputes and concluded with the hope that a peaceful settlement could be negotiated.³⁶

After his speech Dulles consulted again with Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold and with French Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville.³⁷

At a background press conference in New York on September 17, Dulles described the situation as extremely

serious and refused to rule out demilitarization as a solution. He told reporters that he believed that the GRC had the right under the self-defense clause in the exchange of letters between Dulles and Yeh in 1955 to take action against the shore batteries if the blockade continued. He added:

Now that does not mean that I favor that action but I think the reasons against the action, perhaps, are more of a practical character than legal. But I do think that it is not unfair for the Chinese Nationalists to interpret the letter as giving them the right to act in defense of Quemoy and Matsu if otherwise they appear to be blockaded out of existence.³⁸

On the 19th in a public statement in New York, Dulles again described the situation as "extremely serious." He expressed the hope that the Warsaw talks would bring positive results, but he observed that Gromyko at the UN had made no reference to the talks. He stated that he is not aware of any concrete diplomatic intervention by other governments.³⁹

On the same day in Washington, a Defense Department spokesman said that U.S. pilots had the right of hot pursuit into China but were not authorized to bomb the mainland.⁴⁰

On September 20, the State Department announced that the United States had rejected the last demand of Khrushchev

message to Eisenhower quoted above.^{41*}

The White House later issued two statements from Newport explaining that the note had been rejected because it was "couched in language that it abusive and intemperate" and contained "inadmissable threats."⁴³

On September 30 Dulles, in a press conference, made a number of statements reflecting the Administration's belief that the blockade had been broken. Dulles believed that it was now time to seek a diplomatic settlement of the immediate issues.^{**} He now believed that the crisis was over in the sense that the Chinese Communist attempt to change the situation by military force had been defeated and that therefore the problem was to satisfy the "legitimate" demands of the Chinese Communists in relation to provocative action by the Nationalists from the Offshore Islands, and to try to stabilize the situation. Though they were widely interpreted as expressing a change in Dulles' position, the Secretary's answers rather reflected a change in his view as to what stage the crisis was in. With the military phase over, Dulles was prepared to make what he felt to be

*The rejection was decided on and the note drafted at a State Department meeting attended by Dulles, Herter, Robertson, Reinhardt, Murphy, Parsons and Marshall Green.⁴² No information on the substance of the meeting is available.

^{**}See pp. 326-328.

legitimate political concessions, but at any time when the military situation heated up, he would go back to his opposition to any concessions.

In response to questions from reporters, the Secretary of State stated that the United States would be in favor of a reduction in the size of the Quemoy garrison after the establishment of a de facto cease fire in the Taiwan Straits. He proposed a mutual renunciation of force in the Taiwan Straits and indicated that he thought it was "foolish" to keep so many forces on the Island. Dulles denied that the United States was going beyond the Formosa Resolution and stated that:

I would say today, if the United States believed that these islands could be abandoned without its having any adverse impact upon the potential defense of Formosa and the treaty area, we would not be thinking of using forces there. It's because there is that relationship, under present conditions, conditions primarily of the Communists' making, that there is the tie there.⁴⁴

He expressed doubts as to the likelihood of a return to the mainland except the wake of a Hung an-type revolution and stressed that the United States had no

commitment to help Chiang return to the mainland.^{45*}

American optimism was reflected by Admiral Felt, who told a press conference that resupply was now at an adequate level. He reported that U.S. forces had no limits put on their actions in international waters. On the touchy question of resupply or defense of the smaller islands, Felt asserted that "when we speak of the Quemoy's we normally speak in terms of big and little. The Tans are just little tiny islands."⁴⁷

On October 1, Eisenhower at a press conference indicated that as a military man he did not think that it was a good idea for the Nationalists to station so many troops

*The Dulles press conference was interpreted in Taiwan as well as in the United States as a major change in U.S. policy. In an effort to remove this interpretation, Dulles on October 1 sent a telegram to Drumright in which he stated that there had been no conscious change in his position expressed in his press conference of September 30. He declared that the United States has continually asserted that it would not accept change by force, but if there were a ceasefire it would explore the possibility of preventing the Offshore Islands from becoming a source of irritation. He noted that a majority of correspondents in Washington opposed U.S. policy and therefore played up this statement as indicating a change in the U.S. position. He declared that we must remove the feeling that the United States has put its destiny in the hands of Chiang, a feeling shared by much of the press and many members of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, and most of all by allies who believe Chiang wants war. He concluded by declaring "I will not go one inch further in this matter than seems to be necessary in order to prevent whole Chinese policy from being swept overboard."⁴⁶

"Overboard"

on Quemoy, but he stressed that the basic issue "is to avoid retreat in the face of force, not to resort to force to resolve these questions in the international world. And we believe if we are not faithful to that principle, in the long run we are going to suffer."⁴⁸

In response to a critical letter from Senator Green,^{*} Eisenhower in a reply, which was dated October 2 and made public October 4, strongly defended U.S. policy while stressing his desire for peace. The letter, which accurately reflected Eisenhower's thinking, stated that the United States would observe the Congressional Resolution on Formosa but implied that the terms of the Resolution would require him to defend the Outer Islands if this were necessary for the defense of Taiwan. He went on to say what might happen:

The Chinese and Soviet Communist leaders assert, and have reason to believe, that if they can take Quemoy and Matsu by armed assault that will open the way for them to take Formosa and the Pescadores and as they put it, "expel" the United States from the West Pacific and cause its fleet to leave international waters and "go home."

I cannot dismiss these boastings as mere bluff. Certainly there is always the possibility that it may in certain contingencies, after taking account of all relevant facts, become necessary or appropriate for the defense of Formosa and the

^{*} See above, p.

Pescadores also to take measures to secure and protect the related positions of Quemoy and Matsu.

The President stated that if military action were necessary, "our friends and allies would support the United States" and in fact would be "appalled" if the United States retreated in the face of military pressure. He expressed the hope finally that the American people would be united if war came.⁴⁹

DECISION MAKING IN WASHINGTON

When word reached American officials on September 7 that the first U.S. escorted resupply operation had been successful and had been carried out without Chinese Communist opposition, there was some hope that the crisis was at an end. The Chinese Communists' failure to fire on the September 7th convoy was interpreted as being a sign that the Chinese Communists might not be prepared to interfere with a U.S.-supported GRC resupply operation.

Dulles accepted a proposal made by Green that leaflet drops and other overflights be suspended during the Chinese cease fire. This was indicated in a phone conversation with Green. His tentative approval of Green's suggestion that U.S. convoying be halted but indicated that he was inclined to accept JCS advice on this. Dulles asked Green to consult

with Twining or with Burke on the convoy question and to urge on them the need to avoid provocative action.⁵⁰

After consultation with Green, Burke dispatched a message to U.S. forces in the Pacific. The Chief of Naval Operations informed his commanders in the field that, since the Chinese Communists were not then firing against the Offshore Islands, and did not try to interfere with the convoys, it was important to avoid any action which was provocative or might appear to be provocative. He warned that small incidents might have great impact on the negotiations about to be undertaken between the United States and the Chinese Communists in Warsaw. He directed that as long as the Chinese Communists withheld their fire on the Offshore Islands, only one U.S. destroyer could be in sight of the off-loading of the beaches of Quemoy. He suggested that one ship control the situation and call for additional U.S. and GRC support if it were needed as well as "make sure GRC Navy takes proper action." Other U.S. support should remain over the horizon and U.S. aircraft should remain over Taiwan.⁵¹ In addition, attack carrier aircraft day-and-night sweep of the Taiwan Straits were halted.⁵²

A State Department telegram informed Drumright of the being sent to the CNO and asked him to cooperate

in seeing that it was implemented without affecting the build-up on Quemoy. He was also asked to encourage the GRC to avoid provocative action.⁵³

In his phone conversation with Green, Dulles indicated for the first time interest in the possibility of an agreement aiming at the demilitarization of the Offshore Islands. He stated that he realized it would be hard but he hoped it could be worked out and succeed in getting GRC forces back to Taiwan. He indicated that he agreed with Green that the Chinese Communists might be planning further military moves. He asked Green to prepare instructions for Beam asking him to consider demilitarization.⁵⁴

Following this conversation on the morning of the 7th, Green prepared the memorandum requested by Dulles analyzing the possibility for demilitarization of the Offshore Islands. He listed the following arguments in favor:

- (a) To remove a powder keg.
- (b) Withdrawal to defensible terrain.
- (c) Responsive to U.S. and world opinion.
- (d) World opinion demands action. We have come dangerously close to atomic war.

The disadvantages as seen saw them were

- (a) The GRC was bitterly opposed and might refuse.

- (b) A bitter U.S.-GRC controversy at this point would be very dangerous.
- (c) The Chinese Communists might agree but later take the Offshore Islands and the U.S. could do nothing at this point without using nuclear weapons.
- (d) Demilitarization of the Offshore Islands would heighten acceptance of the two-China concept.
- (e) A U.S. proposal for demilitarization would be tacit acceptance that the threat to peace came from the GRC. In order to counteract this the U.S. should simultaneously demand demilitarization of the shore opposite the GRC-held Offshore Islands.
- (f) The proposal would represent a partial surrender to Communist China and therefore would whet their appetite for further gains.

The Green memorandum concluded:

- (1) There is a need to take some steps since we came close to war and there still may be war. "The crisis is far from over."
- (2) Demilitarization is inadvisable.

- (3) The first step should be to get both the GRC and the Chinese Communists to avoid provocative actions.
- (4) The U.S. should approach demilitarization very slowly.
- (5) The U.S. should use the Warsaw talks to identify actions which the Chinese Communists consider provocative.
- (6) It is necessary to maintain close coordination with Taipei.⁵⁵

Green discussed the demilitarized proposal with Burke when he spoke to him later in the day and told him that Dulles wanted the possibility of demilitarizing the Offshore Islands explored. Burke asked his staff to take a quick look at the problem and prepared a memorandum for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. In the memorandum he noted that State was now considering a proposal to demilitarize the Offshore Islands. It seemed to the Navy in its initial look that this was not a good idea. The GRC would react violently. The Communists might accept and later seize the Offshore Islands by "peaceful means" and then the United States would have no recourse but "to blast the hell out of China," and could not do that because of public opinion.

It looked to Burke like an attempt to sweep the problem under the rug.⁵⁶

On the following day, in a follow-up memorandum, Burke noted that in connection with the proposed negotiations in Warsaw, the State Department had suggested the demilitarization of the Offshore Islands be considered. Burke recommended that U.S. forces remain deployed in the Pacific and that the United States insist on an immediate halt of Chinese Communist aggression. He felt that the United States should accept a ceasefire if the proposal came from the Chinese Communists. The United States should agree to demilitarization only if it included the coastal areas plus Chinese Communist islands near Quemoy and Matsu. In addition he felt the United States should demand an inspection system and a guarantee of the territorial integrity of the Offshore Islands underwritten by SEATO or a larger coalition and accompanied by a renunciation of force by the Chinese Communists.⁵⁷

A group of State Department officials met with Secretary of State Dulles on the morning of September 8 and explored the possibility of demilitarizing the Offshore Islands. Though Dulles was to continue to express interest in demilitarization, the others present--Robertson, Parsons,

Green and Deputy Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs, L.R. Lutkins--expressed opposition. Dulles indicated his surprise that the Chinese Communists had not pressed for talks at a higher level. He asserted that he recognized that the Offshore Islands were not used for operations against the mainland but wanted more detailed information.* However small, the "provocative" action from the Islands could not be justified by international law, Dulles said, and the United States should not expect the Chinese Communists to refrain from attacking the Offshore Islands as long as they were used at all as a base for hostile actions. After making these observations, Dulles raised the possibility of demilitarization. Robertson responded that demilitarization was not a practical solution since the Communists could seize the Islands at any time after they were demilitarized. He suggested that the United States might ask the GRC to refrain from any provocative actions from the Offshore Islands.

* On September 11 a detailed statement of Chinese Nationalist actions from the Offshore Islands was sent to Dulles. This memorandum contained the information presented in Chapter I on Nationalist operations from the Islands (see Table 4, pp. 10-12).

Dulles responded that the Chinese Communists would undoubtedly reject demilitarization in return for de facto recognition of GRC control of the Islands and this might be a good reason to make the proposal. He stressed the importance of giving very careful consideration to the American public posture. On the other hand Dulles reaffirmed that the United States should not give an inch on the basic principle of resisting the use of force to pursue territorial ambitions. He declared that the Chinese Communists must not be permitted to use force to gain territory which they had never had under their control. The Communist line that the Offshore Islands were a thorn in their side was nonetheless described by Dulles as having great appeal and for that reason the United States at Warsaw and in its public statements could not ask the Communists simply to renounce the use of force.

Perhaps in an effort to head off the demilitarization proposal to which he objected, Green suggested that the United States might begin the Warsaw talks with the suggestion that the two sides examine means of avoiding provocative action. Dulles indicated that he had been thinking along the same lines and specifically that Beam might ask Wang what actions by the Nationalists the Communists

considered provocative. Robertson responded and expressed the skepticism felt by all of those present except Dulles by asserting that the Communists would reply (as in fact they did) that the provocation was U.S. occupation of Taiwan. Robertson also strongly urged the importance of consulting the GRC before making any moves at Warsaw.⁵⁹

On September 8 the Chinese Communist fire against the second U.S.-escorted convoy brought an end to the hope that the crisis was over. During the ensuing weeks officials in Washington were to continue to explore various diplomatic solutions.* At the same time they sought privately,

* It was at this period that press reports began to most accurately reflect the feelings of the Government at the military level, although there continued to be no hints of Dulles' own efforts to find a peaceful way out of the crisis and the fact that he constantly needed to be pressed by his staff to maintain his tough position. Joseph Alsop, for example, in a column in the New York Herald Tribune on September 10, was able to report that highest Pentagon authorities maintained that the United States would be almost compelled to use tactical nuclear weapons in any fight beyond a mild spat. He reported that U.S. ground and air forces in the Pacific were weaker, except in terms of nuclear weapons, than before Korea. He reported that the planes in the field had been designed and equipped almost exclusively with nuclear weapons in mind and that the B-47 medium bombers of SAC could not deliver anything but atomic weapons. Alsop wrote that Eisenhower had authorized the Joint Chiefs to plan to fight only nuclear wars and he stated that the United States would try to keep the war limited but that it would be up to the Chinese Communist leader not the Pentagon to keep the war limited.⁶⁰

Marguerite Higgins in the same paper the following reported that official sources had laid out preliminary

as well as publicly, to develop support in the United States and abroad for the American position. Despite disagreements on what to do if the current policy failed, Washington officials were all convinced of the importance of avoiding a war with Communist China and of preventing the Chinese Nationalists from provoking the Communists. They were also convinced that the Nationalists would provoke the Communists, if they could find a way to do so which they were sure would involve the United States in the military operation. At the same time that they sought to prevent the Chinese Nationalists from making any rash move, American officials tried desperately to get precise information on the resupply situation. The question of whether or not the blockade could be broken under current conditions was to become very important. Washington was desperately starved for accurate and up-to-date information on what convoys had gone out, how many supplies had landed, why the convoys had failed to land supplies, and why there were to be

the report circulating in Washington that the Navy was preparing an amphibious landing to put GRC troops and supplies on Quemoy within twenty-four hours, but she reported that U.S. forces in the Far East were prepared for such a move and that the order for U.S. ships to sail to Quemoy beaches could come at any time. More accurately she reported that the modern Seventh Fleet warships could not move in the ~~immediately~~ immediately surrounding Quemoy.⁶¹

continued failures to make a massive breakthrough against the artillery fire when prior to the crisis it had been the considered opinion of the American Government that artillery fire alone could not impose a blockade on Quemoy.

In an effort to secure these objectives, two coordinated State-JCS messages were sent out to the Taiwan Defense Command and the U.S. Ambassador on September 8. The military message underlined the fact that the GRC was expected not to provoke incidents or to present the United States with a fait accompli.⁶² The State Department message to Drumright stressed that the GRC must not appear the aggressor. The message cautioned that world opinion was shaped by who appeared to be the aggressor and that therefore the United States and the GRC must act with firmness and resolve but also with calmness and restraint. It emphasized the need for close U.S.-GRC coordination in and in advance of all operations. It noted that there might be temptation on the part of the GRC to provoke incidents which could involve U.S. hostilities but that the United States expected full advance coordination as the right of an ally who would bear the major brunt if war were provoked.⁶³

On September 9 the importance of the Offshore Islands to the GRC had been underlined in a State Department

Intelligence Report which had declared that the loss of the Offshore Islands would affect the GRC assessment of the likelihood of its attaining its fundamental objective of returning to the mainland. The report noted that the severity of the shock to the GRC would depend on the extent of continuing U.S. support, the magnitude of military losses and the changes in attitudes of other countries, but it concluded that it would not lead to the collapse of the GRC. The estimate pointed out that the Offshore Islands, in the eyes of the GRC, was a test of U.S. support of the GRC as the sole legitimate government of China. The report concluded by indicating that the magnitude of the effect of a loss of the Islands would only be slightly affected by whether the Islands fell to a military attack or by a U.S.-forced withdrawal, but that in no case would the GRC launch an attack against the mainland.⁶⁴

In an effort to secure support for its policy in the Taiwan Straits among NATO allies, the United States provided the American Ambassador to the NATO Council with periodic briefings attempting to explain and justify U.S. policy and to secure support for the U.S. position. The briefing paper which was sent to the U.S. representative on September 9 emphasized Chinese Communist naval strength

in the area and declared that "successful assault without concurrent air strikes will depend on the length and effectiveness of preceding bombardment and interdiction operations. . . . If CHICOM continues to press attack, defenders would eventually be over-run in absence of assistance from the U.S."⁶⁵ The U.S. representative stressed that the United States had exercised deliberate restraint in the Taiwan Straits and stressed the conclusion that the Communists had the ability to take the Islands against only a Nationalist defense, therefore pointing up the need for U.S. intervention should the Communists try to seize the Offshore Islands.⁶⁶

On September 11 both the Joint Chiefs and the Chief of Naval Operations sent messages to the Taiwan Defense Commander on the question of whether or not the GRC was making a maximum effort. The JCS message commented on the tendency of GRC craft to retreat as soon as fired upon without waiting over the horizon a while and trying again:

There is a possibility that GRC is being deliberately inept in order to draw U.S. inextricably into conflict with CHICOMS. Consequently, we must be certain that Kinmen [Quemoy] would fall despite all GRC can and should do before we consider taking direct action against CHICOM forces or installations except in self defense. The GRC cannot expect U.S. aid until they have demonstrated that they have determined to see action through to the finish despite hazards. It

is important that the next resupply be well planned and succeed.⁶⁷

The message from the Chief of Naval Operations reported that there was much concern within State, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the JCS over the failure to resupply Quemoy. It stated that the U.S. must be able to make a showing either that the GRC could accomplish resupply or that difficulties would be insurmountable and reported that the issue would come before the Joint Chiefs for further decision on September 15.⁶⁸

A luncheon meeting of Defense Department officials including McElroy, Sprague, Twining and the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Plans and Policy, Admiral Robert L. Dennison, representing Admiral Burke was held on September 12. At the lunch McElroy expressed the feeling that the GRC was not doing all that it could to resupply Quemoy.

The lunch was followed by a meeting at 2 p.m. when those listed above were joined by Dulles and Robertson from the State Department.⁶⁹ Twining reported that he had received a message from COMCOPAC outlining alternatives if the GRC proved incapable of supplying Quemoy. These included authorizing Chinese Air Force attacks on the artillery and providing U.S. escort to the territorial waters. He stated that the JC had replied in a message quoted

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just above that the GRC should first demonstrate more determination. Quemoy, he noted, still had thirty days of supplies left. Dulles asked how helpful GRC counter-battery fire was. Twining replied that it would help keep Chinese Communist heads down but would not be too effective.

A Navy briefing was presented, which suggested that the GRC were not doing their best to supply the Islands and seemed to be trying to get the United States involved. It was Twining's view as well that this was their main motive. McElroy stated that if this were so, a way had to be found to get the GRC to act. U.S. direct involvement would lead to casualties and have serious repercussions, the Secretary of Defense said. Dulles and Robertson questioned whether the GRC was really engaged in a "pretty complicated plot" to get the United States involved.* Dulles stated that it was more likely that the GRC needed experience and training in supply operations under fire. If the GRC could handle resupply there would be more time for maneuver, Dulles said. Otherwise, there would be a real

* A State Department briefing paper had informed Dulles of the Joint Chiefs' view that the GRC were holding back on its resupply effort. The memorandum, prepared by Green and signed by Robertson, had taken the capability seriously and had concluded: "The primary problem seems to be to get the GRC Navy to act. This may require a firm and frank talks with the Generalissimo." 70

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crisis within two or three weeks. Dulles' comments were followed by a general discussion of the difficulty of convoy and the way in which it could be made more effective. McElroy suggested enlisting Drumright's support to get the GRC to make a greater effort. Sprague pointed out that the key was to convince the GRC that the United States would not do the supply job for them. Robertson suggested that, if Smoot confirmed the view that the GRC were dragging its feet, Drumright and Smoot should see Chiang on this. Dulles cautioned that they must be on sure ground before going to Chiang. In that hand U.S. information on the effort was lacking. The activity seemed more like blundering than willfulness. It was inconceivable, Dulles stated, that the people of Quemoy would be party to a deliberate plan to sabotage the unloading operations. Twining pointed out that the men on the boats, on the shore, controlled the unloading. The LSM which had been damaged and failed to unload on the 11th could have unloaded one half of its cargo in the 40 minutes that it had. Twining stated that aerial resupply offered only limited possibilities. McElroy approved Dulles' suggestion that the United States station observers on boats and on the beaches. It was agreed that the JCS would immediately contact the GRC to inform them of the sense.

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Military planners continued to consider possible ways of aiding resupply. In a memorandum prepared by the Joint Staff for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, it was noted that CINCPAC had proposed that either the United States permit GRC bombing of the artillery or U.S. escort all the way in. The Joint Staff study noted that neither of these offered assurance of being useful and was not recommended. It claimed that the supply situation was not critical, although present methods of resupply would never be truly effective, due partly to GRC lack of experience and organization and partly to GRC lack of will or possibly to a deliberate effort to further involve the United States.⁷²

A memorandum prepared in the Office of Chief of Naval Operations provided the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the State Department with a summary of the resupply situation and noted that continued lack of success of U.S. and GRC resupply was a matter of grave concern. It stated that the situation would become critical in two to three weeks if there was no resupply. An enclosure to the memorandum discussed in more detail the problems of resupply. It noted that the Chinese Communist Navy had posed no threat since the United States escorting had begun and that the failure of resupply was then due to:

- (a) Chinese Communist artillery fire on all beaches,
- (b) horrendous sea conditions at this time of year,
- (c) beach profiles which precluded dry-ramp unloading;
and
- (d) GRC deficiencies.

The memorandum continued that U.S. action to correct Chinese Nationalist deficiencies had not yet become effective but declared that when they did become effective it would require a major increase in the Chinese Communist effort to prevent resupply.⁷³

Washington was not prepared to accept the need for a greater American effort. In addition to the optimism reflected in the Navy memorandum just quoted, the daily report to the President on September 15 informed him that both CINCPAC and the TDC had not concluded that the resupply problem was insurmountable. Eisenhower was told that an all-out effort was being made to get the GRC to do the job.⁷⁴

A more pessimistic note, however, was sounded in an SNIE, which was published the same day. The estimate predicted that the most likely Chinese Communist course of action was a continuation of the interdiction by which they hoped to make the island untenable. The Communists were expected to be willing to take action involving considerable

risk of major conflict with the United States, and it was the unanimous view of the United States Intelligence Board that the Communists would probably fire on American ships going all the way in to Quemoy. They estimated that it was highly unlikely that the Chinese would call off the artillery fire or attempt a landing. A landing was seen as unlikely because it would involve action with the United States, diminish the Communist propaganda advantage, and was unnecessary since the Chinese believed that Quemoy would fall to interdiction. The estimate affirmed that the Communists would reject any negotiated settlement restoring the status quo ante or implying a "two-China" situation.

On the subject of Sino-Soviet relations, the estimate began with the premise that the Soviets were informed about and approved of Chinese actions. The Soviets were believed to be interested in discrediting the United States and increasing Communist China's prestige. The Intelligence Board expressed the belief that the Soviets would not intervene if the war were extended by conventional means to the mainland opposite Quemoy and that they might not intervene if tactical nuclear weapons were used in the vicinity of Taiwan. However, the estimate concluded in the observation that at some point the extension of nuclear

operations into China, the Soviets would probably directly attack American forces and their bases.^{75*}

On the afternoon of September 16, Eisenhower in Newport spoke to Dulles at the UN by phone on the Far East situation.⁷⁷ In the conversation Eisenhower proposed exploring the possibility of developing a program which might appeal to the GRC of making their forces more mobile by giving them some amphibious vessels and reconditioned destroyers. The President suggested that this might be less costly than keeping the reinforced Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Straits.⁷⁸ Dulles spent the day at the UN consulting with members of his staff as well as with British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd^{**} and UN Secretary General Hammarskjold.⁷⁹ On the same afternoon, Acting Secretary of State Christian Herter phoned Rear Admiral Heyward, Director of the Political-Military Policy Division of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. Herter told Heyward that Dulles earlier in the day had asked for some

* I have no way of assessing what effect if any this estimate had. It was apparently prepared while most of the officials in the CIA Office of National Estimates who normally prepared estimates on China were away and did not express the considered view of these individuals.⁷⁶

** For a discussion of British pressure on Washington, see below, pp. 457-464.

thoughts on what alternative courses there might be to continuing in the present support of the GRC and occupation of the Offshore Islands.

In addition to asking for a response as quickly as possible to the question of what alternative courses there might be to the one the United States was currently pursuing, Herter requested the Pentagon's best judgment by 2:00 p.m. on two questions, both assuming that no cease-fire in the Taiwan Straits took place and that the resupply continued at the present unsatisfactory rate:

- (1) How long can the status quo be maintained before pressure by the GRC would be so great that we would have to take action beyond that now being taken, and
- (2) How long can supplies on the Island hold out?⁸⁰

As will be seen, the JCS answer to Herter's basic question of what alternatives there were was to be approved by the JCS and forwarded to the State Department by a letter from the Secretary of Defense on the 26th--10 days after Herter made his urgent request.* Herter did receive an answer to his second even more urgent question. In a briefing given by the Navy for Herter and other State

*It took 4 days for the Joint Chiefs to prepare an answer but 6 more for the State Department to prepare a letter.

Department officials it was also stated that the problem of Communist interdictory fire was insoluble on a long-term basis. The best estimate available in the Pentagon was that the overall logistic status in the Quemoy Islands was computed to be six or eight weeks at the present rate of consumption.⁸¹

On September 17, the first reassessment of the resupply situation, which was to lead finally to a more optimistic conclusion being accepted by all, was made in the office of the Chief of Naval Operations. The memorandum was in the nature of a revision of a document prepared on September 16 and cited just above. The original memorandum had been based on information from the field. The second memorandum was based on a careful evaluation of consumption rates during the period September 3 to September 13. The new memorandum essentially presented the case that both current supplies on the Islands and resupply rates had been underestimated by a value of a half. Table 24 indicates graphically the change that was made in the estimate of current supplies on Quemoy. The memorandum also reported that convoys since September 3 had delivered a total of 348 tons.^{82*}

*The optimistic conclusion reflected in the memorandum was reported by the Washington Post, John F. Harris of the Washington Post reported that U.S. military officials disagreed.

Table 24

NAVY ESTIMATES OF SUPPLIES AVAILABLE ON QUEMOY

ITEM	SEPT. 16 ESTIMATE	SEPT. 17 ESTIMATE
1. Rations	28 days	59 days
2. Equipment	45 days	95 days
3. Fuel	48 days	101 days
4. Ammunition	29 days	62 days

SOURCE: Navy Memorandum for the JCS, Subject: Resupply of the GRC Held Offshore Islands (U) OP-6016/WDW D60, September 17, 1958 (Top Secret).

Meeting in Herter's office on September 18, State Department officials had apparently not yet received or had not accepted the more optimistic Navy report on the resupply situation. The meeting had been called to draft a memorandum to be delivered to the Secretary of State in New York. The memorandum, which was approved and taken by Green to the United Nations, stated that the resupply situation was not bright and that it was not clear the new deliveries would break the blockade. It reported that Communist fire was very effective. The Islands might be able to hold out for several more months by reducing requirements to 300 tons by not firing back, and by increasing resupply to 100-200 tons per day. Sooner or later, the memorandum noted, the United States would have to take new action in the form of more extensive convoy, attacking shore batteries or granting permission to the GRC to attack shore batteries. The Communist artillery could not be knocked out by conventional fire and thus the only effective means would be to use atomic weapons--with grave

with Chiang Kai-shek on the futility of the Quemoy convoy runs. He stated that they knew it was possible to land enough supplies on a bombarded beach, to keep a sizeable force fighting for a long time. This could be done by training in amphibious techniques, by mixing up the landing procedures to keep the enemy guessing, and by determination. He wrote that the Pentagon thought there was no need to bomb until all possibilities for supplying Quemoy had been tested. 83
 U.S. convoy orders had been tested.

political costs. The memorandum suggested that the GRC might be willing to accept demilitarization within a few weeks but that the Communists might stall the negotiations long enough for the Islands to fall. Thus it was necessary to get an immediate ceasefire. The memorandum concluded by suggesting that the United States quietly accept a resolution calling for an end to provocative action and demilitarization of the Islands. ^{84*}

On September 19 Dulles returned to Washington from New York ⁸⁵ and on the next morning met at his home with Eerter, Robinson, Twining, Burke, Sprague and Cabell. Dulles began the meeting by declaring that the situation was grave and that there were three possibilities for interpreting the Chinese Communist action:

- (1) They were preparing an open attack on the OSI, perhaps followed by an attack on Taiwan.
- (2) They were engaged in a Berlin-type blockade operation.
- (3) There would be a gradual tapering off as in 1954 and 1955.

He declared there was insufficient evidence to be confident of a trend toward (3). Burke declared that the

*It is not clear whether State Department officials envisioned putting pressure on the GRC to implement the resolution.

Chinese Communists might let up for a while to get out of caves and gun emplacements. Dulles emphasized that if the Chinese Communists let up, the United States should reciprocate. Twining agreed and, addressing the second possibility, questioned whether a Berlin-type blockade could be broken. Burke, reflecting the optimistic mood which was becoming prevalent within his office, declared that Quemoy had hidden supplies and stated that Quemoy could hold out for two months at the rate of 100 tons a day of resupply, but not indefinitely at that rate. However, he stated that a buildup of 300 tons a day was likely, and this could go on for a long period. The problem was morale since the troops could not be rotated. Dulles stated that the GRC seemed to have failed to appreciate that the United States had a serious problem with public opinion and had to keep its allies together. He asked whether there was any evidence of planned assault. He noted that the Chinese Communists probably realized that this would involve U.S. sea and air action against the shore batteries and assault craft, which would defeat the assault. Twining noted that the White House paper of September 6, initialed by the President, had given the Joint Chiefs of Staff standing authority to oppose assault by using conventional weapons.

against artillery positions and naval targets. Cabell reported that the CIA estimated that the Soviet Union would not become involved unless the war extended beyond the Straits area. He noted that the Soviets were not taking overt measures as they took in the Middle East crisis and were not making any unusual preparations.* Burke declared that the Khrushchev letter seemed to be saying that Soviet support would be only logistical unless the United States used atomic weapons, in which case they would retaliate in kind.

Dulles reported that Drumright's assessment of the situation was that it was satisfactory, provided that the United States was prepared to oppose an assault and could keep Quemoy resupplied on an austerity basis. However, the real question was whether the GRC would tolerate this situation, bearing in mind that the GRC might view this as a golden opportunity for recovering the mainland by bringing on a U.S.-Chinese Communist war. Dulles reported that this view was held by many people in Taiwan.

* This reflected the CIA's position more accurately than the SNIE. See above pp. -425 and especially the n^x on p. 425.

General discussion followed on how to make the GRC aware of the possibility that Taiwan would be destroyed in such a war. Twining noted that a GRC air attack on the shore batteries would not knock them out, and even if retaliation were limited to Quemoy, the situation would be bad. Dulles summarized his opinion at the time by indicating that he felt this was essentially a Berlin-type blockade operation in which the United States must make a maximum supply effort while ready to act against Chinese Communist assaults and restraining the GRC. Burke indicated that the current resupply operations were costing the U.S. Navy three million dollars, and indicated that he proposed considering an all U.S. convoy.*

Dulles stated that the United States should ask the GRC to restrain itself. He noted on the basis of his recent visit to the United Nations that most UN members supported withdrawal and that, in a sense, they were right, but that there was unfortunately no way to withdraw from the Off-shore Islands without engendering the collapse of the GRC and the takeover of Taiwan by insurgents and possibly by

* Though this was not brought out at the meeting, it was the current view of the A Force as well as American Officials on Taiwan that an expansion of Chinese Nationalist forces was preferable to an increase in U.S. action. 85

attack from the mainland. Cabell noted that this was the CIA estimate as well.

If the issue were raised in the UN, Dulles noted, the United States would press for a resolution asking for a ceasefire, a renunciation of force, and an examination of measures to tranquilize the situation. The Chinese Communists might not accept such a resolution, but it might pass. At this point, Twining read a JCS paper opposing United Nations consideration of the issue. Dulles replied, however, that there was no way of preventing it. In addition, the United States had been committed by Eisenhower in 1955 to go to the United Nations. He noted that a resolution putting Taiwan under a UN trusteeship and admitting Communist China to the UN was the real feeling of 90 per cent of the members of the UN and that only J.S. pressure prevented it. 87*

* On September 21, Hanso Baldwin in an analysis of the situation in the New York Times reported that the GRC had revised its tonnage supply estimates for Quemoy from 900 to 400 to 500 tons a day, but that supply ships were still landing one day's supplies during the week and that Quemoy was living on its reserve stock. He reported that the LST's were succeeding in running the blockade by being loaded with 20 amphibious tankers which themselves were loaded with ammunition, food and supplies. In the same article, Baldwin reported that the howitzers recently sent to Taiwan had reached Quemoy safely. He pointed out that they could fire both nuclear and conventional ammunition but that the GRC has nuclear ammunition. He reported that the Chinese Communists could

On September 22, Dulles in an "off-the-record" talk to the senior officers course of the Foreign Service, noted that American policy had two justifications: American national interest in keeping the Pacific in friendly hands and the principle that open force should not be used for aggressive purposes. He declared that American policy had to be publicly defended on both grounds. Dulles also pointed out that legal considerations prevented the United States from saying unconditionally that it would defend Quemoy. He indicated, however, that the Chinese Communists had tied Taiwan to the Offshore Islands and "that goes pretty far to resolve the problem and make clear what we would do." He denied that the United States stood alone on this issue, noting for example, that "the Government of the United Kingdom is thoroughly sympathetic with our position."⁸⁸

During the latter part of September, the Joint Chiefs of Staff worked on an answer to Secretary Herter's request

continue the artillery blockade and still have a lot of ammunition.

The article was interpreted by some observers as being an attempt by some, whoever had leaked the information about the howitzers to Baldwin, to make an implicit nuclear threat to the Chinese Communists. But as was noted above, the desire to send the howitzers to Quemoy, which was supported by both the Navy and the State Department, was simply a very substantial military Nationalist conventional

as to what possible alternatives there were to the current course of action in the Taiwan Straits. By the time the Chiefs could produce an answer which could then be forwarded through ISA and approved by the Secretary of Defense, the supply situation might be drastically improved and the Chief's recommendation that the current policy should be pursued would be accepted by all. On September 20 they met to approve a draft proposal. The Chief of Staff of the Air Force came to the meeting with a brief from his staff, noting that the Eisenhower speech of September 11 had defined U.S. determination to support the Offshore Islands and stating that the real issue was the position of the Free World in the Far East. A memorandum which he presented to the Joint Chiefs prior to the meeting suggested that the United States prepare a Joint U.S.-GRC ultimatum threatening GRC bombing and U.S. escort and/or bombing and a U.S. show of air strength. The memorandum stressed, however, that a limited release of the GRC was preferable to active U.S. participation.⁸⁹

On September 20, the Joint Chiefs approved a memorandum which they proposed be sent to the Secretary of State reaffirming the desirability of continuing the U.S.-GRC supply system. The memorandum noted that as the GRC became

more adept, an increasing amount of supplies could be delivered. It declared that any modification would involve increasing U.S. participation. This latter alternative could not be implemented with any degree of assurance, and the extent of U.S. involvement would necessarily depend on Chinese Communist reaction. It noted that the Radford/Robertson/Chiang conversation of 1955, which produced an agreement to blockade the coast of China in the event of hostilities, was no longer applicable since the completion of the railroad to Amoy had removed Chinese Communist dependence on seaborne supplies.⁹⁰

Following normal Department of Defense channels, the JCS memorandum was sent to the Office of International Security Affairs, which received the memorandum and produced a draft cover letter on September 22.^{91*}

* It should be noted that the role which ISA played at this time was far different from the one it plays in the current Administration. During this crisis ISA's function seems to have been confined to military assistance, with the Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs, Irwin, present at meetings and participating only in discussion of items related to supplies to the GRC under the military assistance program and not concerned with the broader political and military aspects of the problem. The focus for these at the time in the Pentagon was the Navy Office of Political-Military Affairs and more generally the Office of the Chief of Operations.

The final version of the letter was not produced until September 26, when ISA forwarded to the Secretary of State the JCS memorandum quoted above with a cover letter endorsing its conclusions.⁹²

Before Dulles left for New York on September 25, he met with Herter, Robertson, Macomber and Allen Dulles⁹³ and was presented with a new estimate of the resupply situation made in the Navy and the State Department. The results were contained in a memorandum signed by Robertson. In it the Secretary was advised that the Joint Chiefs of Staff now believed that they could keep Quemoy going indefinitely and that the only problem might be morale, though at the present time it was very high. Neither the Chinese Communists nor the GRC were likely to expand the military operations.⁹⁴

Early in the day of September 25, Drumright had been told that Washington did not believe that the resupply situation was sufficiently critical to justify bombing the mainland as proposed by the Nationalists. Drumright was told that the JCS believed that resupply could be further improved and if the GRC expanded operations in any way, this would have a bad effect on U.S. and world opinion.⁹⁵